



RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

April 20, 2012

Secretary Ken Detzner
Secretary of State
Florida Department of State
R.A. Gray Building
500 S. Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

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TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

Dear Secretary Detzner:

By the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Florida, under the provisions of Article III, Section 8, of the Constitution of Florida, I do hereby sign and transmit Senate Bill 1994, enacted during the 114th Session of the Legislature of Florida, since statehood in 1845, during the Regular Session of 2012 and entitled:

An act relating to Postsecondary Education...

The establishment of Florida Polytechnic University, an institution with the primary mission of educating students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), will be vital to our economy in the years to come. The U.S. Department of Commerce indicates that STEM fields have grown three times faster than non-STEM fields over the past ten years, and Enterprise Florida reports that 15 of the 20 fastest growing career fields require STEM educations. Additionally, workers in these fields earn 25% more than their counterparts. As we strive to make Florida an economic leader in the 21st Century, it is imperative that we become competitive with states such as California and Texas in building clusters of STEM-focused industries. Florida Polytechnic University, with a strong focus on meeting these needs, will be a vital part of this effort by attracting top students and star researchers.

Many concerns have been raised about the development of Florida Polytechnic University such as the timing of accreditation, the financial commitment required to establish a new university, and whether the state will generate a positive return on investment. This bill requires Florida Polytechnic University to meet the benchmarks established by the Board of Governors for the transition by the University of South Florida Polytechnic to university status.

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By December 31, 2016, Florida Polytechnic University must earn accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, initiate the development of STEM programs, seek discipline specific accreditations, attain 1,244 full-time equivalent students with at least 50% in STEM programs, complete certain facility and infrastructure projects, and be able to perform all major administrative functions.

Additionally, because Florida Polytechnic University is receiving the base budget funding previously appropriated to the University of South Florida Polytechnic, the new university will not result in additional financial strain on the State University System or its sister institutions. Further, no additional state capital dollars are needed to construct Phase I (2012-2016) of the new campus, and the university can continue to utilize shared space at Polk State College and the Florida Industrial and Phosphate Research Institute, as well as leased space in the surrounding communities.

The Board of Governors 2012-2025 Strategic Plan considers improvement in STEM degree production a foremost goal. The strategic plan requires the State University System to increase STEM degree production from 9,605 to 22,500 per year by 2025. This would increase the percentage of STEM degrees granted from 17% to 25% overall for the system. The plan also requires the State University System to more than double the number of startup companies associated with state universities each year and nearly double research and development expenditures. Florida Polytechnic University, with its strong focus on STEM programs, will be a key component of the system meeting these goals. Additionally, Florida Polytechnic University will allow the system to continue to meet the well-documented needs of a growing population with a strengthening demand for higher education access.

At a time when the number of graduates of Florida's universities in the STEM fields is not projected to meet workforce needs, the establishment of Florida Polytechnic University will help us move the needle in the right direction. It is vital for the future of Florida's economy that we meet the need for a STEM educated workforce. Failing to meet this challenge will be costly to our state for decades. Florida Polytechnic University can and must play a key role in addressing this challenge and making Florida a competitive leader on a global scale.

For the reason stated above, I hereby sign into law Senate Bill 1994.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott", written over a horizontal line.

Rick Scott
Governor